

a healthy balance

Did you know your Assistance Program could help?

Coping with Oppositional Defiant Disorder

As they grow, typical children go through many phases of challenging a parent's authority. But when does defiance cross the line from typical adolescent behavior to a diagnosable behavior problem?

Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) is an ongoing pattern of disobedient, hostile and defiant behavior toward authority figures that goes beyond the bounds of normal childhood misbehavior.

What follows is a basic description of the disorder.

Symptoms of ODD

- Frequent temper tantrums
- Excessive arguing with adults
- Active defiance and refusal to comply with adult requests and rules
- Deliberate attempts to annoy or upset people
- Blaming others for his or her mistakes or misbehavior
- Often being touchy or easily annoyed by others
- Frequent anger and resentment
- Mean and hateful talking when upset
- Seeking revenge

Since other psychological and medical conditions may be causing some of the symptoms associated with ODD, a careful assessment is needed to appropriately identify disorder. The assessment should include looking at contributing factors such as another behavioral health condition, (e.g., Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, Attention Deficit Disorder, Bipolar Disorder and Depression). Children may have a combination of disorders.

Dealing with Oppositional Behavior

If your child is demonstrating these symptoms, try using one or more of the following strategies:

- Set reasonable consequences that can be enforced consistently.
- Use time-outs or breaks if the conflict with your child gets worse, not better.
- Use positive reinforcement and praise when your child shows cooperation and flexibility.

Families may need to put considerable work into dealing with this disorder; however, many ODD children do respond to positive parenting techniques. If you have questions or concerns, consult with your child's pediatrician or family doctor.

Helping you through the challenging times of being a parent is just one of the ways your Assistance Program can help. For more information, call any day, any time, for assistance, resources or a referral to local services.

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solved